

season. Seasons generally opened in January and closed in April. Harvest of scallops for local consumption was allowed year-round (Gutsell 1928).

During the 1980s at the peak of the calico scallop fishery on the east coast of Florida, Mr. Bill Lambert patented a mechanical shucking machine to shuck calico scallops. Four shucking machines were set up in North Carolina; one in Salter Path, one in Broad Creek, one on Highway 58 north of Cape Carteret, and one in Sneads Ferry. These machines primarily shucked calico scallops shipped from Florida in trucks, but also engaged in bay scallop shucking when they were present in sufficient quantities to operate them profitably.

The presence of the mechanical shucking machines in North Carolina influenced the bay scallop prices and harvest limits during the seasons. When bay scallops were plentiful, the mechanical shucking facilities could profitably start up and would buy bay scallops by the bushel at a reduced price. This was in direct competition with the hand shucking operations, which desired a level of volume that would provide the highest price. Many fishermen would urge the Division to set harvest limits each season just below those which would enable the mechanical shucking machines to operate profitably.

Bay scallop abundance and harvest have widely fluctuated since the 1930s. Landings have ranged from a peak at approximately 1,400,000 pounds of meats in 1928 when North Carolina led the nation in scallop production, to a low of less than 150 pounds in 2004 (Figure 6.1). Landings are closely linked to weather and other environmental events.